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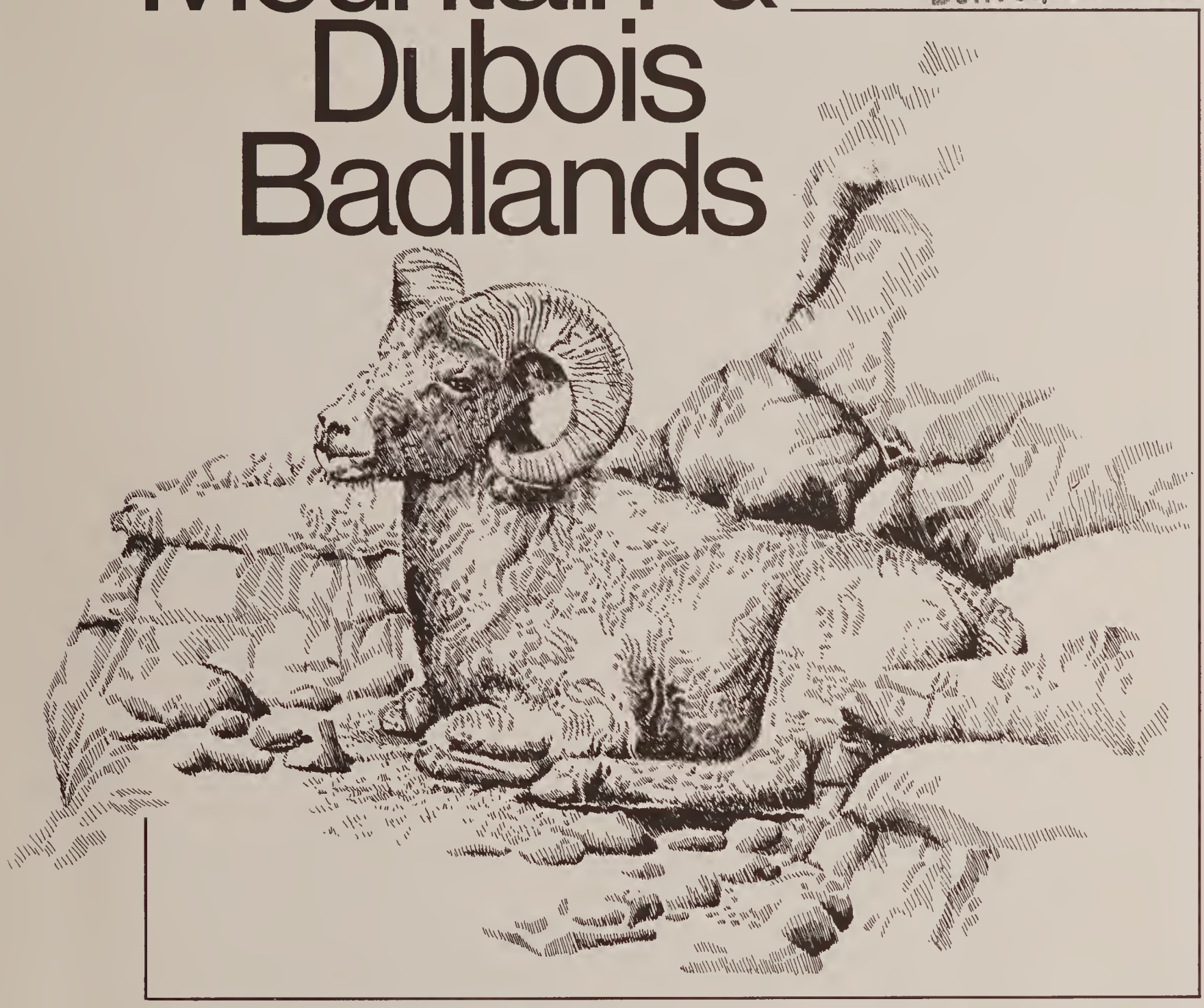

DRAFT Wilderness Supplement to the Lander Resource Management Plan

U. S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Rawlins District

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United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WYOMING STATE OFFICE
P.O. BOX 1828
CHEYENNE, WYOMING 82003

October 14, 1988

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Dear Reader:

The Bureau of Land Management has prepared a draft environmental impact statement on wilderness suitability for the Whiskey Mountain and Dubois Badlands Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). The WSAs are located near the town of Dubois, Wyoming, in the the Lander Resource Area of the Rawlins District. This document was prepared to supplement the Lander Resource Management Plan.

Once the notice of availability of this document has been published in the *Federal Register*, we will be seeking your comment on the adequacy of the environmental impact statement. You will have 90 days to comment starting with the date of notice of availability and ending in mid-February.

Written comments may be submitted at any time during the comment period to the Rawlins District Office, Bureau of Land Management, P.O. Box 670, Rawlins, Wyoming 82301, ATTN: EIS Team Leader. Formal public hearings will be held at the Town Hall in Dubois, Wyoming, on December 14, 1988 and at the Fremont County School District Administration Building in Riverton, Wyoming, on December 15, 1988. Both hearings will commence at 7 p.m.

We appreciate your comments and your interest in our wilderness study process.

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Sincerely,

Hillary A. Oden

Hillary A. Oden
State Director

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WHISKEY MOUNTAIN-DUBOIS BADLANDS WILDERNESS SUPPLEMENT TO THE LANDER RMP RAWLINS DISTRICT, WYOMING

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Prepared by:
U.S. Department of the Interior
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Rawlins, Wyoming
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SUMMARY

This Resource Management Plan (RMP)/ Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Supplement to the Lander RMP analyzes the impacts that would result from designating or not designating two wilderness study areas as wilderness. The Proposed Action recommends nonwilderness for both WSA 030-110, Whiskey Mountain (487 acres) and WSA 030-109, Dubois Badlands (4,520 acres).

Several environmental issues were developed during the study process. These include: (1) impacts on wilderness values; (2) impacts on recreational off-road vehicle use; (3) impacts on bighorn sheep management; and (4) impacts on energy and mineral resources. These issues are common to both WSAs.

The alternatives for each WSA and the significant impacts are described below.

Alternatives and Significant Impacts by WSA

Whiskey Mountain

Proposed Action (No Wilderness)

As stated above, the Proposed Action would recommend 487 acres for uses other than wilderness.

Wilderness values in the WSA would not be given long-term protection, but there are no anticipated management actions in the short term which would adversely affect wilderness values.

All Wilderness Alternative

Under this alternative, all 487 acres of the Whiskey Mountain WSA would be designated as wilderness, thus giving long-term protection to the WSA's wilderness values. However, management actions designed to improve bighorn sheep habitat in the long term would be restricted, possibly affecting up to 10% of the bighorn population.

Dubois Badlands

Proposed Action (No Wilderness)

Under the Proposed Action, the entire 4,520-acre Dubois Badlands WSA would be recommended for uses other than wilderness. However, no management actions are anticipated that would adversely affect wilderness values in the WSA. The WSA would be open to oil and gas leasing only with a no surface occupancy stipulation. The WSA would be open for locatable mineral entry, but no activity is predicted because of the area's low potential for the occurrence of locatable minerals. Further, the WSA would be closed to off-road vehicle use.

All Wilderness Alternative

Under this alternative, all 4,520 acres of the Dubois Badlands WSA would be designated as wilderness, thus giving long-term protection to the WSA's wilderness values. The entire WSA would be withdrawn from all forms of mineral entry and leasing; thus, opportunities to gain subsurface geologic information regarding oil and gas would be diminished. There would be little impact to locatable minerals because the potential for their occurrence is low.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PLANNING PROCESS

Purpose and Need

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) mandates the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to manage the public lands and their resources under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. Wilderness values are identified as part of the spectrum of multiple land-use values to be considered in BLM inventory, planning, and management. The WSAs described in this document are being studied for consideration as wilderness under the authority of Section 202 of FLPMA. This section directs the BLM to prepare land-use plans to determine a multiple use framework for managing the public lands. Wilderness suitability determinations are an integral part of multiple-use planning.

Section 202 WSAs are studied as part of the BLM's resource management planning process. The WSAs being studied in this document are covered by the Lander Resource Management Plan (RMP). The Lander RMP is a comprehensive framework for managing about 2.5 million acres of federal land in the Lander Resource Area. The RMP identifies 13 management units in the reousrce area, two of which are the Whiskey Mountain Unit and the Dubois Unit. Management prescriptions for each of these units are outlined in the RMP.

Following public review of this document, a final document will be prepared.

A Record of Decision (ROD) releasing the public lands from further wilderness study in WSAs not recommended for wilderness designation will be prepared once the final EIS is filed with the Environmental Protection Agency. The ROD may be approved 30 days after the FEIS is filed.

This document discusses the environmental impacts of either designating or not designating 5,007 acres in two WSAs as wilderness. The WSAs include Whiskey Mountain (WSA WY-030-110, 487 acres) and Dubois Badlands (WSA WY-030-109, 4,520 acres. Although both of these WSAs are less than the 5,000 acre minimum required by FLPMA, they were kept in the Wyoming Wilderness Study Area Final Inventory because of the high public interest in these areas. The WSAs are listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1

LIST OF WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

Name	Inventory Number	Public Land Acreage	RMP
Whiskey Mountain	WY-030-110	487	Lander
Dubois Badlands	WY-030-109	4,520	Lander

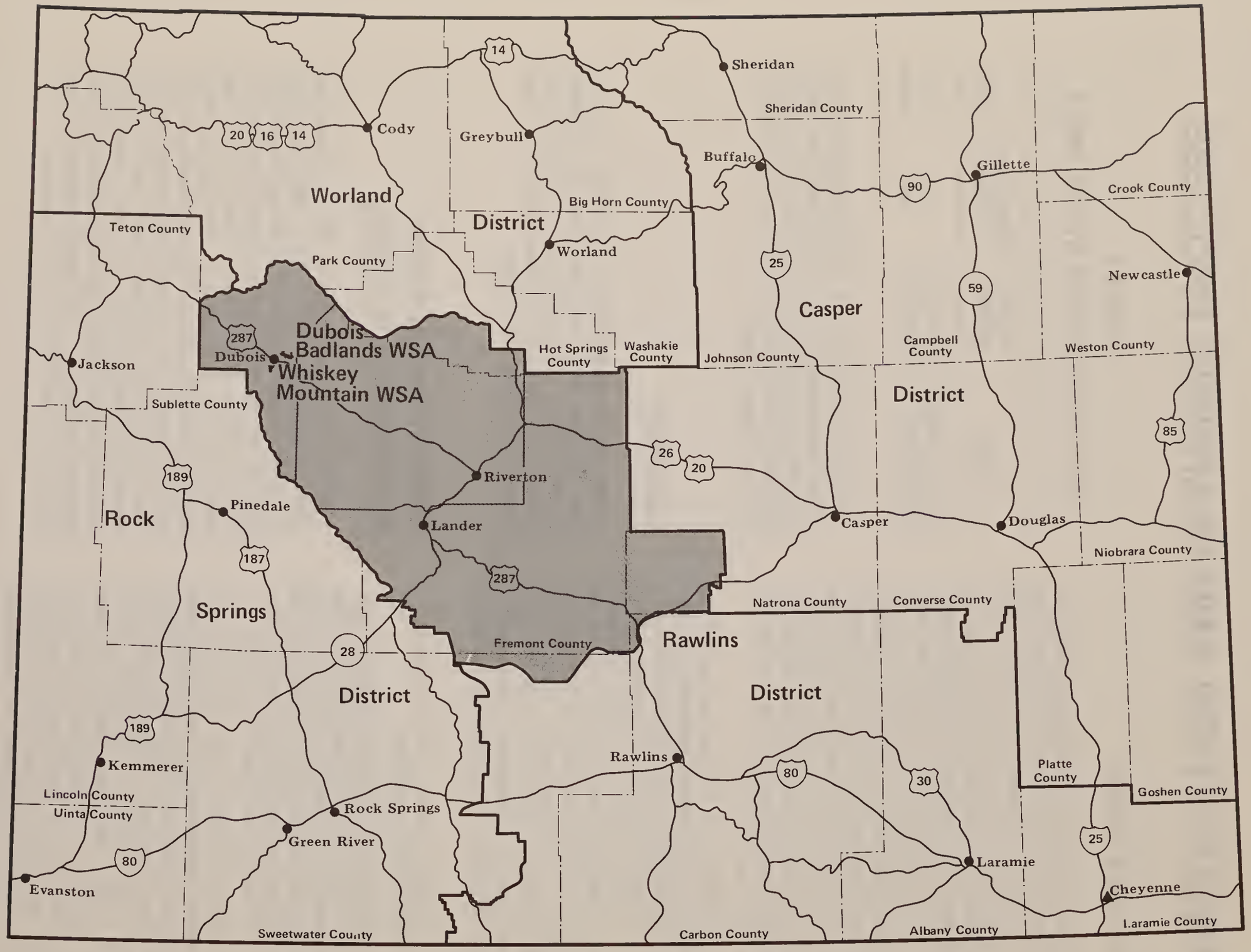
The proposed action is nonwilderness for both WSAs. Management of the 487 acres in the Whiskey Mountain WSA and the 4,520 acres in the Dubois Badlands WSA would be in accordance with the Lander RMP.

Location

The WSAs are located in northwest Wyoming near Dubois, Wyoming (see map 1). Whiskey Mountain WSA is located about 5 miles south of Dubois, and the Dubois Badlands WSA is located about 2 miles east of Dubois.

Environmental Issue Identification/Scoping

The scoping process for the Whiskey Mountain/Dubois Badlands Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) encompasses issues identified by the BLM staff, the public, and government agencies at all levels. Scoping occurred throughout the development of the Lander RMP. Scoping also occurred at special meetings dealing specifically with these two WSAs held in Dubois and Lander on December 11 and 12, 1985. Numerous meetings were held with individuals, interest groups, industry representatives, and government agencies. The environmental issues selected for analysis in this EIS follow.



Map 1
General Location
Wilderness Study Areas

Issues Selected for Analysis

Impacts on Wilderness Values

The wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, and primitive recreation could benefit from wilderness designation. The same values may be adversely affected by uses and actions that would occur should the WSAs not be designated wilderness. The degree to which these values would or would not be preserved is an issue for analysis in the EIS.

Impacts on the Development of Energy and Mineral Resources

Wilderness designation would affect the ability to explore for and develop mineral resources by withdrawing designated lands from mineral entry and leasing. The effect of wilderness designation on the development of mineral resources is an issue for analysis in the EIS.

Impacts on Recreation and Off-Road Vehicle Use

Wilderness designation would eliminate the use of recreational off-road vehicles (ORVs) in the WSAs. Eliminating this use could affect the availability of opportunities for ORV recreation and shift ORV uses currently occurring in the WSAs to adjacent lands. Elimination of ORVs might also help preserve opportunities for nonmotorized forms of recreation. The impact of wilderness designation on recreation and ORV use in the vicinity of the WSAs is an issue for analysis in this EIS.

Impacts on Bighorn Sheep Management

Both WSAs contain populations of bighorn sheep. Whiskey Mountain is part of a larger area in which intensive management of bighorn sheep habitat is occurring. This management includes vehicle use for trapping operations and chemical or mechanical vegetative manipulations. Wilderness designation could preclude such activities in both WSAs. On the other hand, wilderness designation may prevent other uses from occurring which might be detrimental to the sheep population. Therefore, the impact of wilderness designation or nondesignation on bighorn sheep is an issue for analysis in the EIS.

Issues Not Selected for Analysis

The following issues were identified in scoping, but were not selected for detailed analysis in the EIS. The reasons are discussed below.

Impacts on Livestock Operations

Concerns were raised that livestock operators in the WSAs could be required to modify their operations within designated wilderness in a manner that would have significant adverse economic impacts on their business. This issue was considered but not analyzed in detail because the BLM's Wilderness Management Policy provides for the continued use of wilderness areas for livestock operations at historic levels. Although the management practices of livestock operators in the WSAs would be more closely regulated, they would continue as they did prior to wilderness designations subject to reasonable regulations. However, because livestock grazing occurs in each of the WSAs, livestock management will be described for each alternative in chapter 2 and again in chapter 3 (Affected Environment).

Impacts on Threatened or Endangered Species

Wildlife and vegetation inventories and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service indicate that no known threatened or endangered species in the WSAs would be affected by the alternatives being considered. Therefore, this issue was dropped from further consideration.

Impacts on Cultural Resources

Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office during scoping and review of existing inventory information indicate that the WSAs do not contain any known cultural resource sites eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The cultural resource sites that do exist consist of lithic scatters and campsites which would be managed and protected under current law with or without wilderness designation. Because the significance of the known and expected cultural resource sites in the WSAs is considered to be low and because developments even under the No Wilderness Alternative would not cause significant impacts to cultural resource sites, this issue was dropped from further analysis.

Impacts on Water Quality

Concerns were raised regarding how water quality would be affected by wilderness designation or nondesignation. For Whiskey Mountain, there would be no timber sales, mineral exploration, or development which could potentially decrease water quality in Jakey's Fork. For Dubois Badlands, a highly erosive area, oil and gas leases would not be issued under the All Wilderness Alternative. Under the No Wilderness Alternative, the leases would be subject to the No Surface Occupancy Stipulation (see Appendix A). Oil and gas wells would have to be located outside the WSA and thus, would not significantly affect soil stability. The area would be open to mineral location, but no activity is expected. Also, the area would be closed to off-road vehicle use even under the No Wilderness Alternative and livestock use would continue at historic levels under both alternatives. Thus, erosion and the resultant sediment loads delivered to the Wind River after heavy rains would not be affected by wilderness designation or nondesignation. As a result, this issue did not receive further analysis.

Alternatives Considered But Not Included for Detailed Analysis

Partial Wilderness Alternatives

A partial wilderness alternative that would recommend for wilderness something less than the entire acreage of the WSAs was considered but not analyzed because of the WSAs small size. Reducing their size further would not significantly reduce resource conflicts, improve the quality of the wilderness values, or improve the WSAs' manageability while maintaining essential wilderness values.

Management and Development by Other Organizations

Alternatives suggested by the Citizens for Multiple Use and Dubois Women in Timber for both WSAs during scoping were to consider management of these areas by other federal agencies, including agencies of the Departments of Interior and Agriculture, State of Wyoming agencies, and local governments. The concept behind these alternatives would be to provide maximum opportunities for nonconsumptive use and uses that do not damage or deplete, but that would enhance and protect the tracts. These opportunities should, at the same time, be sensitive to the economy of Fremont County and provide incentive for increased tourism. The alternatives suggested center around the creation of wildlife and Indian culture parks or reserves to provide for public education, interpretation, recreation, and research. Developments in the general area could include construction of a visitor center(s) for viewing bighorn sheep and elk, construction of a museum/interpretive center for the Sheepeater Indian Culture, and provision for an art gallery or studio to be constructed by the private sector.

The existing RMP for this area states that proposals for sale or exchange, as well as Recreation and Public Purpose Act leases and patents will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This document analyzes the environmental impacts of either designating or not designating two WSAs consisting of 5,007 acres as wilderness. Therefore, specific plans such as the establishment of a visitor center or the creation of parks or reserves are not developed as part of this EIS. However, the No Wilderness Alternative would not preclude future consideration of any of these proposals. The All Wilderness alternative would not preclude consideration of any of these proposals outside the actual boundaries of the WSAs.

CHAPTER 2

ALTERNATIVES

Introduction

The BLM's wilderness study policy requires that a wilderness EIS address "No Wilderness/No Action," and "All Wilderness" alternatives for each area under wilderness consideration. In addition to these required alternatives, other alternatives may be considered to provide a full range of management options.

This wilderness EIS describes two wilderness study areas and analyzes in detail two alternatives for each WSA. For each WSA, the No Wilderness Alternative constitutes no action; therefore, separate alternatives were not developed. The No Wilderness/No Action Alternative has been developed from the Lander Resource Area final RMP.

Alternatives Considered in Detail - Whiskey Mountain WSA

Proposed Action (No Wilderness)

Under this alternative, the Whiskey Mountain WSA (487 acres) would be recommended as nonsuitable for designation as wilderness (see map 2). Resource management would emphasize protection and enhancement of wildlife values while maintaining compatible uses of the area such as recreation. Management of the area would be consistent with cooperative management efforts of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management to manage the Whiskey Mountain bighorn sheep winter range for the purpose of perpetuating the bighorn sheep herd for sport hunting, aesthetics, transplant stock, and educational and scientific values.

Minerals Management

The Whiskey Mountain WSA would continue to be closed to mineral leasing unless drainage of federal oil and gas reserves occurred. In the event drainage is determined, any oil and gas leases that may be issued within the unit would include a No Surface Occupancy (NSO) Stipulation (see appendix A). There would be no exceptions to the NSO restriction. The drainage of federal oil and gas reserves is not anticipated.

The WSA has been segregated from locatable mineral entry since 1970. The area would continue to be closed to mineral entry. There are no mining claims existing at present. Therefore, no mining or mineral exploration activities are expected.

Wildlife Habitat Management

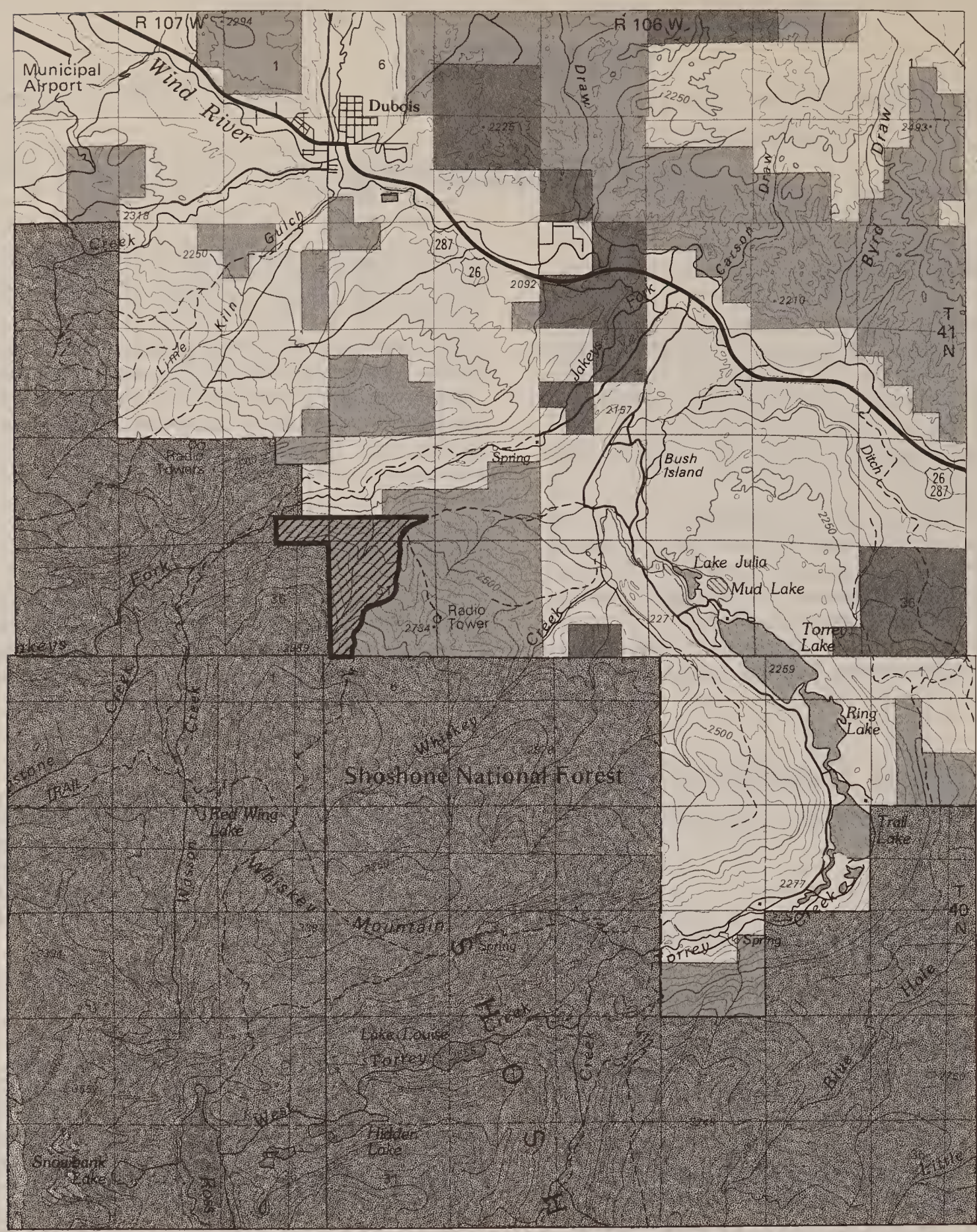
Management would emphasize the maintenance and enhancement of the bighorn sheep winter range and perpetuating the bighorn sheep herd for sport hunting, aesthetics, transplant stock, and educational and scientific values.

The two existing habitat improvement projects, a guzzler and a buck and pole fence, would be maintained. Vegetation manipulation techniques, such as spraying and/or cutting trees, would be employed to prevent coniferous trees from invading bighorn sheep range and to open forested areas to allow ease of movement to preferred sites. Bighorn sheep trapping operations could be conducted in the WSA.

Recreation and ORV Use

The Lander RMP limits ORV use in the Whiskey Mountain Management Unit to designated roads and trails. This designation would include the Whiskey Mountain WSA under the No Wilderness Alternative and there would be no roads or trails designated for ORV use within the WSA. Current recreational ORV use in the WSA is estimated to be 10 visitor days annually.

The entire WSA would be open for other recreation activities including hunting, horseback riding, camping, photography, fishing, hiking, and backpacking. No recreation facilities exist in the WSA and none are planned. The area would continue to be used as access to the USFS wilderness to the south. Recreation use for these activities is estimated to be 300 visitor days annually. It is reasonable to expect modest increases in recreation use over time, but projections beyond existing planning estimates (15 to 20 years) indicate that use would remain below 500 visitor days annually in the foreseeable future.



WSA Boundary

Federal Land

State Land

Private Land

National Forest Land

Proposed for Nonwilderness

Map 2
Proposed Action (Nonwilderness)
Whiskey Mountain

Grazing Management

Approximately 215 acres of the WSA are under grazing lease. Within these 215 acres, about 115 acres are suitable for grazing and produce 8 AUMs. The remaining 100 acres under lease are unsuitable for grazing due to steep, rocky terrain. No changes in livestock grazing are anticipated. No new improvement projects are planned. The remaining 272 acres are allocated for wildlife uses.

All Wilderness Alternative

Under this alternative, the Whiskey Mountain WSA (487 acres) would be recommended as suitable for designation as wilderness. Management of the area would be guided by BLM's Wilderness Management Policy, issued September 24, 1981. Management would provide for protection and preservation of the area's natural conditions and wilderness character. Recreation, wildlife, livestock grazing, and mineral resources would be managed to ensure that wilderness values were not impaired.

Minerals Management

The area has been segregated from mineral leasing since 1970 under various authorities. No new mineral leasing would be allowed. There are no existing oil and gas leases or other mineral leases; therefore, there would be no exploration or production activities.

The WSA has also been segregated from locatable mineral entry since 1970. The closure to mineral entry would continue. There are no mining claims existing at present. Therefore, no mining or mineral exploration activities are expected.

Wildlife Habitat Management

Wildlife habitat would be managed to protect Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep winter range as much as possible. Habitat improvement techniques which depend upon mechanized equipment or chemical treatment would not be allowed under this alternative. Seasonal and yearlong habitat for other big game and nongame species would be maintained. The two existing habitat improvement projects, a guzzler and a buck and pole fence, would be maintained. No other improvement projects are planned. Bighorn sheep trapping for transplant operations would not be conducted within the WSA because it generally requires vehicles to support the trapping operations.

Recreation and ORV Use

The entire WSA would be closed to ORV use, once the area was designated by Congress.

The entire WSA would be open for other recreation activities including hunting, horseback riding, camping, photography, fishing, hiking, and backpacking. No recreation facilities exist in the WSA and none are planned. The jeep trail which forms the eastern boundary of the WSA would continue to be used as a foot and horse trail to access the USFS wilderness to the south. Recreation use for these activities is estimated to be 300 visitor days annually. It is reasonable to expect modest increases in recreation use over time, but projections beyond existing planning estimates (15 to 20 years) indicate that use would remain below 500 visitor days annually in the foreseeable future.

Grazing Management

Approximately 215 acres of the WSA are under grazing lease. Within these 215 acres, about 115 acres are suitable for grazing and produce 8 AUMs. The remaining 100 acres under lease are unsuitable for grazing due to steep, rocky terrain. No changes in livestock grazing are anticipated. No new improvement projects are planned.

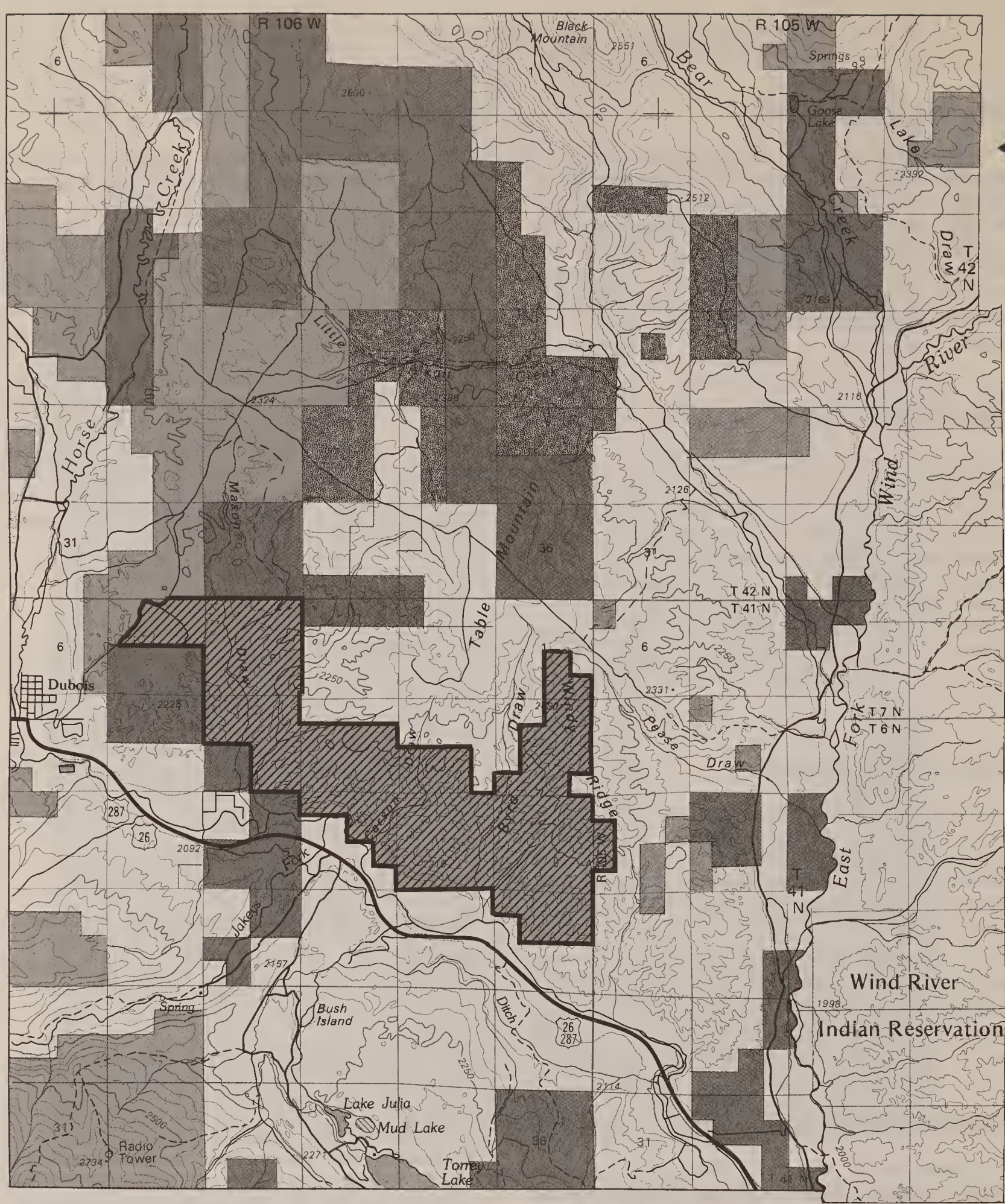
Alternatives Considered in Detail - Dubois Badlands WSA

Proposed Action (No Wilderness)

Under this alternative, the Dubois Badlands WSA (4,520 acres) would be recommended as nonsuitable for designation as wilderness (see map 3). Resource management would emphasize protection of wildlife values, scenic qualities, and watershed while maintaining compatible recreation, mineral, and grazing uses.

Minerals Management

The area would be open to mineral leasing. Currently, there are two oil and gas leases covering approximately 2,004 acres which expire on December 31, 1988. These existing leases are subject to the Wilderness Protection Stipulation (see appendix B). No activity is anticipated because it



WSA Boundary

Federal Land

State Land

Private Land

National Wildlife Refuge

Proposed for Nonwilderness

Miles

0 1 2 3 4

Map 3
Proposed Action (Nonwilderness)
Dubois Badlands

would more than likely impair wilderness values and therefore could not be approved. Future leasing would be subject to the No Surface Occupancy Stipulation (appendix A) to protect the area's wildlife habitat and fragile soils. Exploration is not anticipated on any future leases subject to no surface occupancy.

The area would be open to locatable mineral entry. The area was designated an ACEC in the Lander RMP; therefore, surface-disturbing activity except for casual use would require the approval of a Plan of Operation as set forth in 43 CFR 3809. No activity is anticipated due to low potential for the occurrence of these minerals.

Wildlife Habitat Management

Winter and yearlong range for big game and nongame species would be maintained although no specific habitat improvement projects are planned.

Recreation and ORV Use

The Lander RMP closed the WSA to vehicle use. This designation would continue under the No Wilderness Alternative.

The entire WSA would be open for other recreation activities including hunting, horseback riding, camping, photography, fishing, hiking, and backpacking. Recreation use for these activities is estimated to be 750 visitor days annually. No recreation facilities exist in the WSA and none are planned. It is reasonable to expect modest increases in recreation use over time, but projections beyond existing planning estimates (15 to 20 years) indicate that use would remain below 1,000 visitor days annually in the foreseeable future.

Grazing Management

Livestock grazing would continue to be managed the same as it is now. A total of 746 AUMs are presently available in the WSA, encompassing portions of three allotments. Livestock grazing occurs in the spring/early summer and then again in the autumn. No adjustments are anticipated. No new improvement projects are planned.

All Wilderness Alternative

Under this alternative, the Dubois Badlands WSA (4,520 acres) would be recommended as suitable for designation as wilderness. Management of the area would be guided by BLM's Wilderness Management Policy, issued September 24, 1981. Management would provide for protection and preservation of the area's natural conditions and wilderness character. Recreation, wildlife, livestock grazing, and mineral resources would be managed to ensure that wilderness values were not impaired.

Minerals Management

No new mineral leasing would be allowed after designation as wilderness. There are two existing oil and gas leases covering approximately 2,004 acres. These leases were issued after the passage of FLPMA, and therefore, are subject to the Wilderness Protection Stipulation (see appendix B). Given the lack of present drilling activity in the vicinity and the lease expiration date of December 31, 1988, no oil and gas activity would be anticipated under this alternative.

The area would be closed to mineral entry. There are no mining claims existing at present. If any mining claims were staked prior to designation as wilderness, only activities which do not impair wilderness values would be allowed. No mining or mineral exploration activities are anticipated due to low potential for the occurrence of these minerals.

Wildlife Habitat Management

Winter and yearlong range for big game and nongame species would be maintained although no specific habitat improvement projects are planned.

Recreation and ORV Management

The entire WSA would be closed to ORVs. The WSA would be open for other recreation activities including hunting, horseback riding, camping, photography, hiking, and backpacking. No recreation facilities exist in the WSA and none are planned. Recreation use for these activities is estimated to be 750 visitor days annually. It is reasonable to expect modest increases in recreation use over time, but projections beyond existing planning estimates (15 to 20 years) indicate that use would remain below 1,000 visitor days annually in the foreseeable future.

Grazing Management

Livestock grazing would continue to be managed the same as it is now. A total of 746 AUMs

are presently available in the WSA, encompassing portions of three allotments. Livestock grazing occurs in the spring/early summer and then again in the autumn. No adjustments are anticipated. No new improvement projects are planned.

TABLE 2

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS

WSA	Resource	Proposed Action (No Wilderness)	All Wilderness
Whiskey Mountain	Wilderness Values	No long-term protection of wilderness values on 487 acres (entire WSA); no management actions planned in short term which would adversely affect wilderness values.	Wilderness values on 487 acres given long-term protection.
	Recreation	ORV use limited to designated roads and trails but none open on 487 acres; no reduction in visitation for viewing bighorn sheep. Visitation stable at 310 visitor days annually.	Ten visitor days displaced from 487 acres. Insignificant impact due to similar opportunities on nearby public land.
	Wildlife	Conditions for bighorn sheep on 487 acres would improve over the short term and be maintained over the long term.	Long-term successional changes could result in relocation or reduction of up to 10% (100 animals) of bighorn sheep herd.
	Energy and Minerals	Entire WSA (487 acres) would continue to be closed to mineral leasing or entry. There is low potential, so no development would be forgone.	Entire WSA (487 acres) would continue to be closed to mineral leasing or entry. There is low potential, so no development would be forgone.
Dubois Badlands	Wilderness Values	No long-term protection of wilderness values on 4,520 acres (entire WSA); no management actions planned in short term which would adversely affect wilderness values.	Wilderness values on 4,520 acres given long-term protection.
	Recreation	ORVs eliminated from 4,520 acres as described in the Lander, RMP. One hundred visitor days displaced from 4,520 acres. Insignificant impact due to similar opportunities on nearby public land.	ORVs eliminated from 4,520 acres due to wilderness designation. One hundred visitor days displaced from 4,520 acres. Insignificant impact due to similar opportunities on nearby public land. No further impacts due to wilderness designation are anticipated.
	Wildlife	Over long term, wildlife habitat would receive high degree of protection with little chance of adverse impact.	Over long term, wildlife habitat would receive high degree of protection with little chance of adverse impact.
	Energy and Minerals	Entire WSA (4,520 acres) open to oil and gas leasing subject to no surface occupancy stipulation. No exploration or development is expected. Entire WSA open to mineral location, but no activity is expected because of low potential for locatable mineral resources.	Entire WSA closed to mineral leasing and entry. There would be no anticipated impacts to locatable minerals because of the low potential. The opportunity to gain information on oil and gas resources would be diminished.

CHAPTER 3

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Whiskey Mountain WSA

General Characteristics

The Whiskey Mountain WSA is about 5 miles south of the town of Dubois, Wyoming. The WSA consists of 487 acres bordering the USFS Fitzpatrick Wilderness Area. The WSA is on the north-facing slope of Whiskey Mountain in the Wind River Mountains. The terrain is rough and mountainous, and the dominant vegetation is limber pine and Douglas-fir. The Whiskey Mountain WSA is bounded by the Ross Lake trail on the east, the Fitzpatrick Wilderness Area on the south and west, and private lands to the north.

Wilderness Values

Size

The WSA consists of 487 acres bordering the USFS Fitzpatrick Wilderness Area. Even though the WSA does not meet the 5,000-acre minimum normally required by the Wilderness Act, it does represent a logical extension of an existing designated wilderness.

Naturalness

There are two very faint vehicle ways within the WSA. An earlier fire blackened most of the timber on the south end of the area. Snags are still standing with some regeneration coming in. Past firewood cutting is evidenced by stumps in some areas. Overall, the area is in a natural condition with the works of human activity substantially unnoticeable.

Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Solitude in the WSA is possible due to its topography and vegetative screening, but because of its small size, the opportunities for solitude are less than outstanding. However, in conjunction with the Fitzpatrick Wilderness Area, opportunities for solitude would be outstanding. There is some influence of motorized traffic on the Ross Lake jeep trail, but it receives little traffic and its influence is only audible and visible close to the trail.

The WSA makes a contiguous extension of the Fitzpatrick Wilderness Area and would complement outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The larger Whiskey Mountain area, including the WSA, is an exceptional hunting, viewing, and wintering area for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep.

Special Features

Whiskey Mountain is within the primary winter range for the largest herd of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in the conterminous United States. The sheep population is of national significance.

Recreation

The primary recreation activities in the Whiskey Mountain WSA include viewing sheep, hunting, hiking, and general sightseeing. Most sheep viewing is done along the lower Ross Lake road. The upper part of the road bordering the WSA is a rough 4-wheel drive trail and is used by hikers, backpackers, and horse packers to access the WSA and the Fitzpatrick Wilderness. There are two short two-track ways within the WSA that are used by hunters. The road and ways are inaccessible in the winter months due to snow. A pack trail runs up the bottom of Jakey's Fork Creek and crosses through a small portion of the WSA. An estimated 300 visitor days annually of non-ORV recreation use now occurs in the WSA. The general area in which the WSA lies is widely known as an exceptional bighorn sheep hunting area.

The Lander RMP, which was finalized in 1987, specified that vehicle traffic would be limited to designated roads and trails in this area. Currently, there is an estimated 10 visitor days annually of recreational ORV use in the WSA and along the Ross Lake trail.

Livestock Grazing

One livestock operator grazes livestock (horses) within the boundaries of the Whiskey Mountain WSA. Approximately 215 acres of the WSA are within the CM Ranch No. 2126 Section

15 grazing lease (see map 4). The active grazing preference of this lease is listed below (see table 3).

TABLE 3

LIVESTOCK GRAZING LEASES IN THE WHISKEY MOUNTAIN WSA

Number and Kind of Livestock	Season of Use	Percent Public Land	Number of AUMs
33 horses	06/01 to 06/30	100 PL	33
34 horses	11/10 to 12/09	100 PL	34

There are 996 acres of public land and 67 active AUMs on the CM Ranch No. 2126 grazing lease. Two hundred fifteen acres (21.6%) and eight AUMs (12%) of the lease are within the WSA. The approximate area grazed by horses within the WSA is 110 acres of public land; another 105 acres are unsuitable for grazing due to steep, rocky terrain along the south side of Jakey's Fork Canyon. The current erosion condition class is rated as slight. The CM Ranch lease was placed in the maintain management category in the Lander RMP.

Forage on the remaining 272 acres of unleased public land in the WSA have been allocated to wildlife uses.

The only BLM structural range improvement within the grazing lease in the WSA is the Jakey's Fork Fence Project No. 4974. Approximately 6,000 feet of buck and pole fence within the WSA was constructed in 1981 by the BLM under interim wilderness management guidelines, and is currently maintained by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Minerals

The Whiskey Mountain WSA is located on the northeast flank of the Wind River Range. The range trends northwest for over 100 miles through west-central Wyoming. It is asymmetric with a gently dipping northeast flank and a steeply dipping southwest flank.

The main rock types exposed within the WSA are massive to thin-bedded limestones, fine- to coarse-grained sandstones, and red shales of the Tensleep Sandstone and Amsden Formation. Also present are igneous and metamorphic rock fragments constituting a glacial moraine that transects the northern portion of the WSA and covers the older sedimentary rocks.

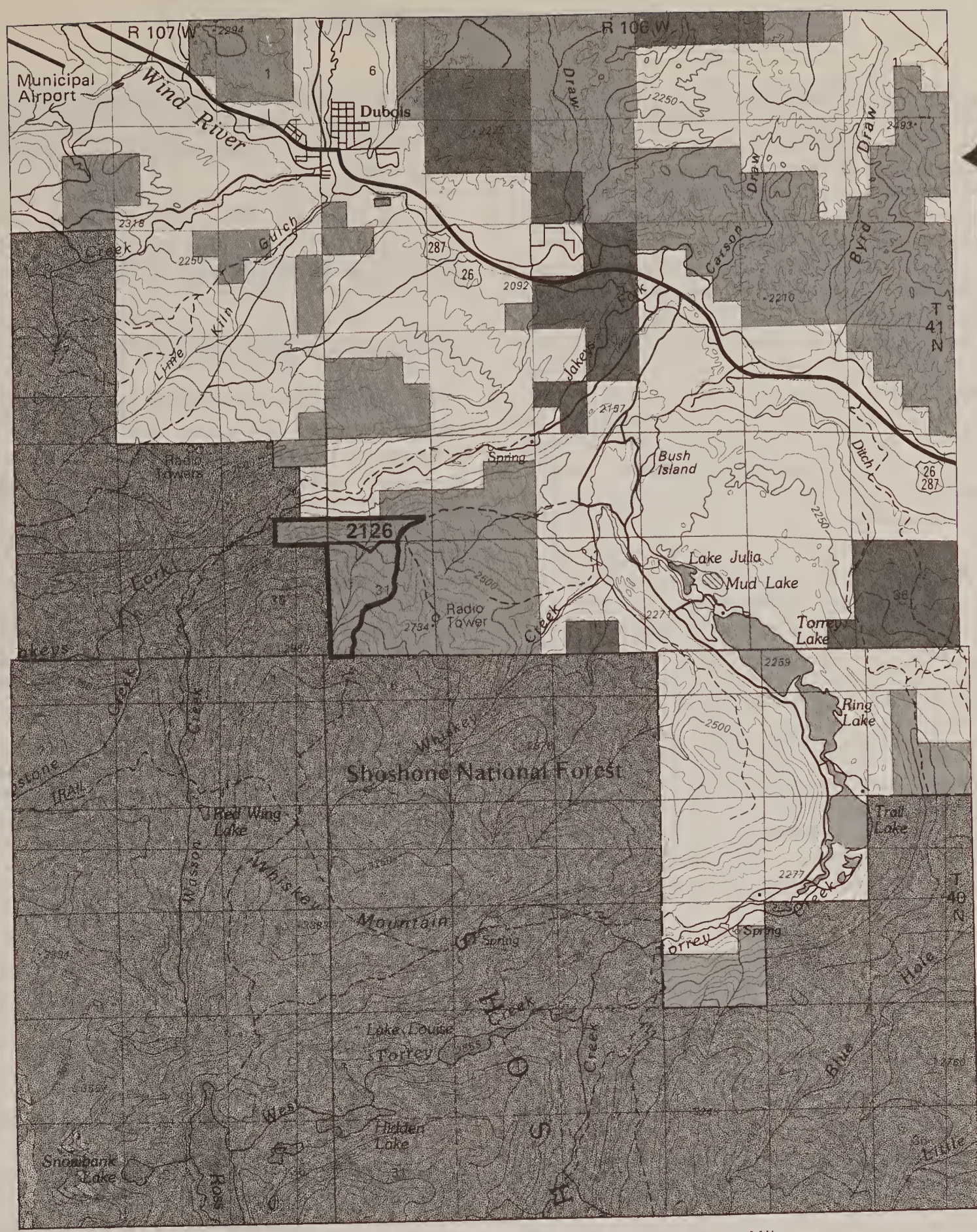
The Phosphoria Formation, Tensleep Sandstone, and Madison Limestone are exposed in or underlie the WSA and are known oil and gas producers in fields throughout the Wind River Basin. The closest field to the WSA is the Dubois Field, located approximately 10 miles north of the WSA. Oil is produced from the Phosphoria Formation in a structural trap called the Dubois Anticline. The Tensleep Sandstone and Madison Limestone also produce from structural traps in other parts of the basin, but are not known to contain hydrocarbons in stratigraphic traps. The geologic structure and geologic processes in and adjacent to the Whiskey Mountain WSA are not suitable for the entrapment of hydrocarbons. The WSA, therefore, has low potential for the occurrence of oil and gas.

No known mineralized zones exist within or immediately adjacent to the WSA. Known occurrences of uranium, fluorite, and barite are present in Section 12 and 13, T. 40 N. R. 107 W, approximately 1.5 miles south of the WSA. This undeveloped mineral occurrence has been determined to be a hydrothermal deposit in the Gallatin Formation (Harris and Hausel et al. 1979, 1985). An occurrence of pyrite, barium, and arsenic in a shear zone deposit has been reported in Section 23, T. 41 N., R. 107 W., about 1.5 miles northwest of the WSA. These undeveloped minerals occur in the Madison Limestone (Harris and Hausel, et al. 1979, 1985). The geologic environment, inferred geologic processes, and lack of mineral occurrences within and immediately adjacent to the WSA lands, indicate a low potential for the occurrence of locatable mineral resources.

The lands within the WSA were closed to mineral location and leasing in 1970. BLM records show the lands to contain no mining claims or mineral leases.

Wildlife Resources

The Whiskey Mountain WSA provides important winter range for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep and seasonal and yearlong habitat for other big game and nongame wildlife species. There are no important fisheries resources or important habitats for candidate, proposed or designated threatened or endangered species in the WSA. Lists of both plant and animal species which may be found in the WSA are contained in the Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Comprehensive Management Plan. This plan is available at the Rawlins District and Lander Resource Area BLM offices.



Miles

0 1 2 3 4

WSA Boundary

Federal Land

State Land

Private Land

National Forest Land

Allotment Boundary

2126 CMRanch

Map 4
Grazing Allotments
Whiskey Mountain

The Whiskey Mountain WSA is contained entirely within a larger area which has been actively managed since the early 1970s primarily for the benefit of wintering bighorn sheep under the above-mentioned management plan. The WSA contains some of the preferred winter use areas for the largest Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep herd in North America. Approximately 1,000 bighorns are located in the entire Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Management Area. Sheep management under the plan has been cited by the North American Wild Sheep Council as "one of the most progressive sheep management programs in North America." The Whiskey Mountain bighorn herd is well-known as the primary source of sheep for transplant to other areas of the western United States, and the herd is of national importance.

The quality and quantity of winter range tends to be the primary limiting factor governing the size of big game herds in Wyoming, and therefore, the winter range within the WSA is important to the herd. Approximately a third of the most important, preferred winter-use areas for the herd is contained within the adjacent Fitzpatrick Wilderness Area. The Whiskey Mountain WSA contains approximately 3% of the preferred-use areas remaining outside currently designated wilderness. While this percentage is small, the WSA for the most part contains lands where the climax community is coniferous forest, while more open, earlier successional stages producing more herbaceous forage are best for wintering bighorns. Lands within the WSA are in an early successional stage and have been actively managed in the past (prescribed burning, chain sawing, and structural improvements), and will need to be managed more intensively in the future to achieve and maintain present herd management objectives. Therefore, in terms of management opportunity and need, lands within the WSA are somewhat more important to wildlife managers than some other nonwilderness preferred-use areas. The existing management plan, which is a cooperative plan between the BLM, U.S. Forest Service, and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, stresses the need to retain wildlife management flexibility and states "the Technical Committee . . . favors any classification or declassification that provides for flexibility for habitat management for the sheep."

Historical public uses of the area related to the bighorn sheep herd in the WSA include sheep viewing and hunting. Specific wildlife management activities which have occurred within the WSA include the installation of a water development (guzzler), a 60-acre prescribed burn to prevent conifers from reestablishing in an area which burned naturally in 1931, chain sawing of dead standing timber, and construction of a 6,000-foot segment of buck and pole fence to prevent unauthorized horse use of preferred bighorn sheep wintering sites.

Dubois Badlands WSA

General Characteristics

The Dubois Badlands WSA lies about 2 miles east of the town of Dubois, Wyoming. The WSA is approximately 4 miles long and varies from 1 to 2 miles wide. The WSA lies just north of the Wind River, and can be seen by motorists on U.S. Highway 287 south of Dubois. The topography of the WSA consists of badlands—flat-topped hills which are extensively eroded and separated by numerous and intricate drainage patterns. The colors of the sedimentary rock bandings are reds and tans and are quite striking. Eroded pinnacles and spires rise above the Wind River. Total relief in the WSA is about 400 feet.

Vegetation in the WSA varies according to elevation. The upper slopes have widely scattered limber pines, while the lower slopes contain sagebrush. The flat tops of some of the ridges have low growing grass as the dominant plant life.

Wilderness Values

Size

The Dubois Badlands WSA is 4,520 acres which is less than the 5,000 acre minimum normally required by the Wilderness Act.

Naturalness

The area is essentially in a natural condition. Intrusions include four fences, some very faint two-track ways, and a reclaimed sand and gravel sale site. The WSA appears to be affected by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The WSA has limited vegetative screening. Topographic screening would only be available in the eroded draws which dissect the WSA. While secluded spots could be found, opportunities for

solitude in the WSA are not considered to be outstanding. Visitor overlap would occur if just a few people were in the unit at any one time.

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation in the Dubois Badlands WSA are limited and lack outstanding characteristics. Day hiking would be possible, but the WSA's size and lack of water limits its attraction for extended backpacking. While some primitive recreation activities are clearly possible in the WSA, the limited number and scope of such activities result in less than outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

Special Features

The Dubois Badlands WSA contains several special features. The area's relatively unique geology and its scenery are major attractions. The WSA contains a herd of bighorn sheep, and it is also winter range for elk, mule deer, and antelope.

Recreation

The primary recreation activities that occur in the Dubois Badlands WSA include big game hunting, furbearer trapping, day hiking, and sightseeing. An estimated 100 visitor days annually of recreation ORV use occurs in the WSA, but the Lander RMP closed this area to all off-road vehicle travel. Visitor use for the other activities is estimated to be 750 visitor days annually. There are no recreation facilities in the WSA and none are planned. Legal access to the WSA is limited to a short stretch of county road which abuts the WSA on its western-most side.

Livestock Grazing

Three operators graze livestock within the boundaries of the Dubois Badlands WSA. The entire area is leased for grazing cattle. The cattle only graze the level, more accessible areas within the WSA. The steep, broken terrain is unsuitable for livestock grazing. Cattle tend to concentrate along Mason Draw in the spring season on the western portion of the WSA. Livestock grazing occurs during the months of April through June and then again in October and November (see map 5).

There are four range improvement fences within the WSA. These fences are not currently authorized as BLM projects and were probably constructed prior to 1970.

There are three grazing leases in the area that are made up in part by lands in the Dubois Badlands WSA. Significant portions of each lease are contained within the boundaries of the WSA, both in terms of acreage and livestock forage. The current erosion condition class is rated as moderate to critical.

Table 4 lists and describes the grazing leases including a breakdown of federal acres and animal unit months in the WSA and in the grazing leases as a whole. The selective management category for each lease is also listed.

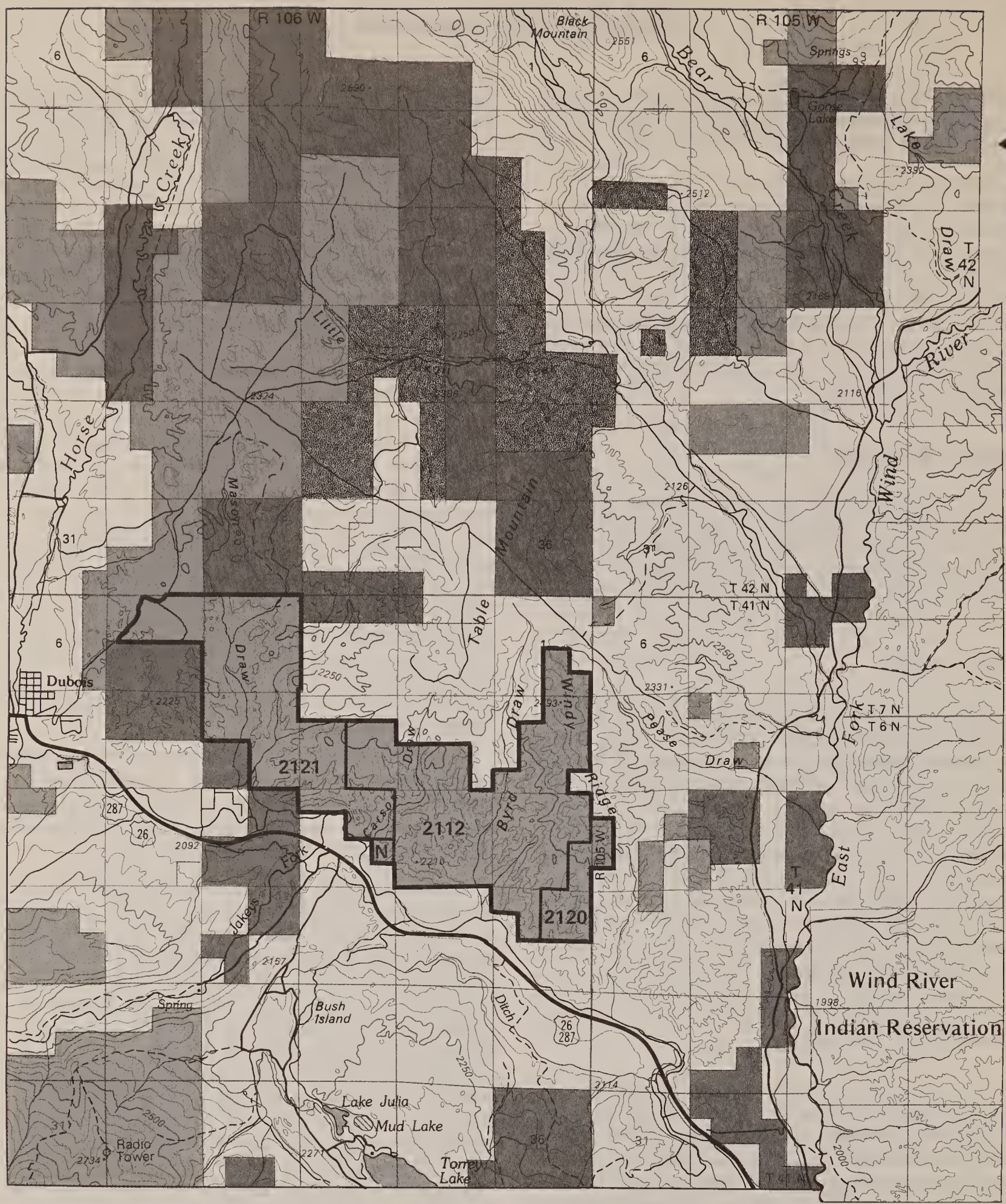
Minerals

The Dubois Badlands WSA is located in the northwestern part of the Wind River Basin, between the Wind River Range to the south and the Washakie Range to the north. The main surface formation is the Wind River Formation. It is composed of varicolored mudstones, sandstones, and conglomerates that erode to form the colorfully-banded badlands typical of the area. Less extensive surface material includes the heterogenous, unconsolidated rock fragments that fill the drainages and cover the open, gentle uplands; and red sandstones and conglomerates of the Indian Springs Formation.

The Wind Ridge Fault System transects the northeastern portion of the WSA. The system consists of a main, northwest-trending thrust fault to the south of several subsidiary faults. Displacement along each is no more than 150 feet.

Two oil and gas leases within the WSA, covering approximately 2,000 acres are shown on map 6, occur within the WSA. Both leases are 10-year noncompetitive leases scheduled to expire on December 31, 1988. One lease contains a stipulation intended to restrict surface disturbance on slopes in excess of 25% (see appendix A). Both leases restrict exploration, drilling, and other development activity during periods of the year that are critical to wintering wildlife. In addition, the leases contain the Wilderness Protection Stipulation (see appendix B) that prohibits all activities that would impair wilderness suitability. Any drilling activity proposed on the leases would most likely impair wilderness suitability and would, therefore, not be allowed. However, no activity is anticipated before the leases expire.

The nearest producing oil field to the Dubois Badlands is the Dubois Field, located approximately 6 miles northwest of the WSA. The field is geologically similar to the WSA and produces oil from the Phosphoria Formation. The Phosphoria, plus several other formations that produce oil or gas in other parts of the Wind River Basin, occur in the subsurface of the WSA.



WSA Boundary

Federal Land

State Land

Private Land

National Wildlife Refuge

Allotment Boundary

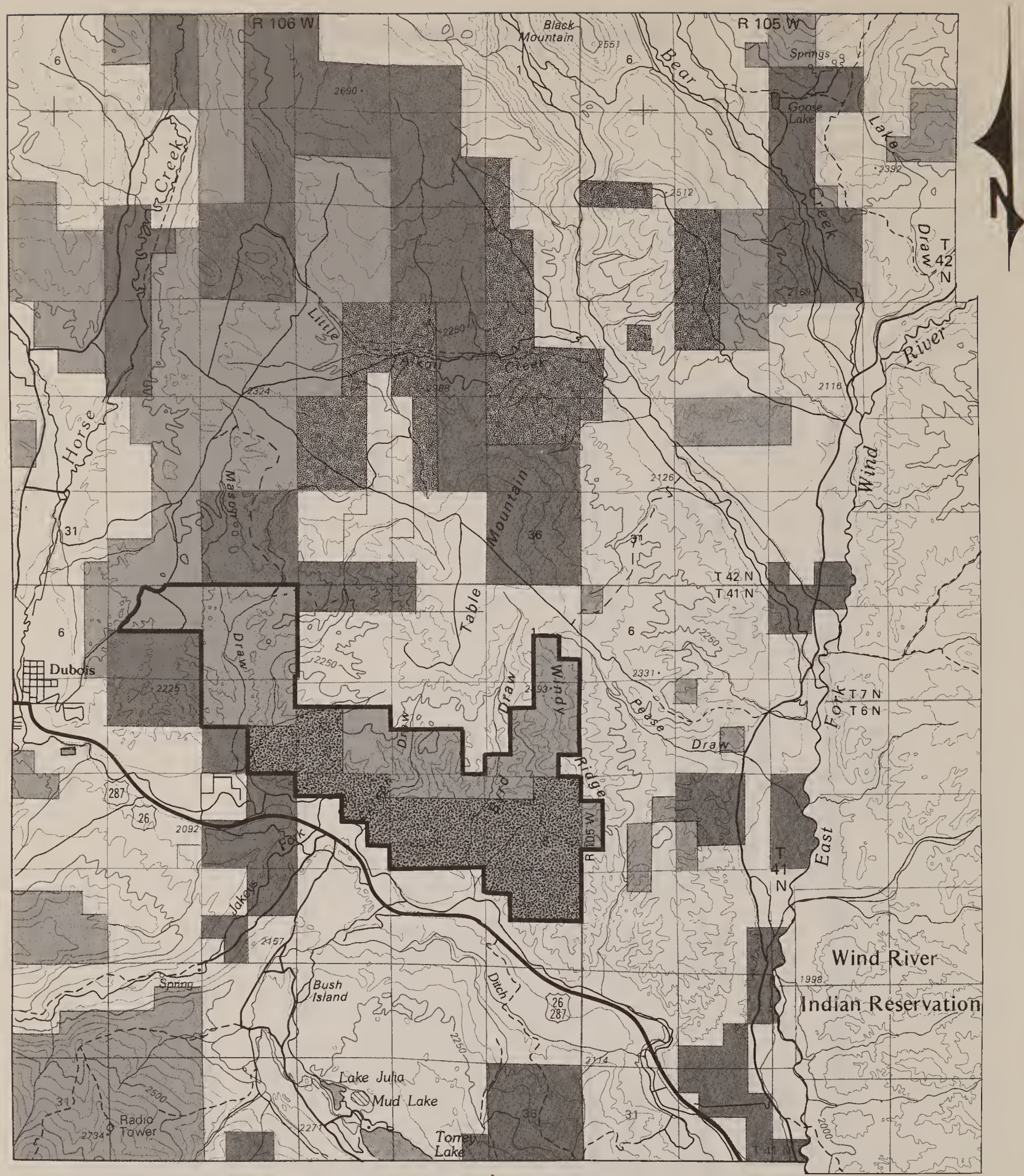
2112	Bear Creek No. 2
2120	Parker 32
2121	R.W. Miller
N	Not leased for grazing

Map 5
Grazing Allotments
Dubois Badlands

TABLE 4

LIVESTOCK GRAZING LEASES IN THE DUBOIS BADLANDS WSA

Grazing Lease Number	Grazing Lease Name	Season of Use	Kind of Livestock	Total Federal Acres	Number of Federal Acres in WSA	Percent of Federal acres in WSA	Total Federal AUMs	Number of Federal AUMs in WSA	Percent of Federal AUMs in WSA	Selective Management Category
2112	Bear Creek Number 2	Spring, Fall	Cattle	3,440	2,360	69	542	360	66	C
2129	Parker 32	Spring, Fall	Cattle	520	320	62	87	53	61	C
2121	R. W. Miller	Spring, Summer, Fall	Cattle	6,720	1,830	27	1,220	333	27	I



WSA Boundary

Federal Land

State Land

Private Land

National Wildlife Refuge

Leased Area (Post - FLPMA Leases)

Miles

0 1 2 3 4

Map 6
Oil and Gas Leases
Dubois Badlands

The Dubois Badlands has moderate potential for the accumulation of oil and gas. This designation is based upon the geologic similarity to the oil-producing Dubois Field, shows of oil in the Phosphoria Formation in the nearby wells discussed earlier and possible oil and gas traps created by the Wind Ridge Fault System.

No known locatable mineral resources occur within or adjacent to the Dubois Badlands WSA. The closest mineral occurrences to the WSA are the same as those described in the Whiskey Mountain WSA, Affected Environment section of this EIS. The Wind River Formation is a well known source for uranium deposits within the Wind River Basin, but prospecting and exploration activities of the past have not made any significant discoveries in this part of the basin. The geologic environment, inferred geologic processes, and lack of known mineral occurrences within the WSA and land adjacent to it, do not indicate potential for the occurrence of locatable mineral resources.

BLM records of October 1987 show the lands in the WSA to be free of mining claims.

Wildlife Resources

The Dubois Badlands WSA provides about one-half the winter-yearlong range for a small, isolated herd of about 50 Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, including most of the preferred winter-use areas for the herd. Although this small area has low forage production and is periodically heavily grazed by other ungulates, it sustains a healthy bighorn herd. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department allows a limited hunt in the area and several trophy rams have been taken in recent years. The area is also critical winter range for antelope and mule deer, and in severe winters some elk use the WSA area instead of winter ranges further to the north. The Dubois Badlands attract wintering big game because of the relatively low elevation and low snow depths resulting from their south-facing aspect. Areas with these qualities are in limited supply in the Wind River Valley and are the key areas responsible for the survival of the bighorn herd, a small herd of pronghorn, and much of the local mule deer population.

Endangered bald eagles use the WSA in the winter on an occasional basis to capture small game or to feed on winter-killed big game. Golden eagles use the area regularly. There is a trout fishery along approximately ½ mile of the Wind River within the WSA.

At present, there are no specific habitat management actions planned for the area and none have been undertaken in the past.

CHAPTER 4

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Whiskey Mountain WSA

Proposed Action (No Wilderness)

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the No Wilderness Alternative, none of the wilderness values in the WSA's 487 acres would receive the long-term protection afforded to designated wilderness. In the short term, there would be little, if any, effect on wilderness values. Sights and sounds from recreational ORV use along the Ross Lake Road would have an adverse impact on solitude. However, the impact would be minimal because recreational ORV use levels are low and contacts between ORV users and other recreationists would be infrequent. The area is segregated from mineral leasing and entry, so wilderness values would not suffer from any exploration or development activities. No other management actions are likely to occur within the WSA which would adversely affect its wilderness values.

Conclusion: Under the No Wilderness Alternative, the WSA's wilderness values would not receive long-term protection. In the short term, no management actions are planned which would adversely affect wilderness values.

Impacts on Recreation

Under the No Wilderness Alternative, recreational ORV use would be limited to designated roads and trails. But because there would be no roads or trails within the WSA designated as open to vehicles, there would be an overall loss of 10 visitor days annually of ORV use. There would not be a reduction in visitation for the purpose of viewing bighorn sheep. Visitation would be expected to remain stable at 300 visitor days annually.

Conclusion: Under the No Wilderness Alternative, there would be a loss of 10 visitor days annually of recreational off-road vehicle use. Visitation patterns for viewing bighorn sheep would not change and the overall use level would not significantly decrease.

Impacts on Wildlife

Under this alternative, the WSA lands would continue to receive a high degree of protection and would be managed primarily for the benefit of bighorn sheep. The WSA lands would remain open to potential future use for sheep trapping, and the existing guzzler and fence would be maintained. The full range of management options (e.g., chain sawing, fertilization, herbicides) could be used over the long term to maintain preferred-use areas in early successional stages preferred by bighorn sheep. Maximum wildlife management flexibility would be retained as recommended in the Whiskey Mountain Comprehensive Management Plan.

Conclusion: Conditions for bighorn sheep would improve over the short term and be maintained over the long term. Over the short term, the water development and fence would be maintained. Over the long term, the lands within the WSA would be open to a full range of wildlife management techniques, and would remain open as a potential sheep trapping area.

Impacts on Energy and Mineral Resources

Under this alternative, the Whiskey Mountain WSA would remain closed to mineral leasing. Should drainage of oil and gas occur, the lands would be leased subject to the No Surface Occupancy Stipulation (see appendix A). However, drainage is not anticipated, and the potential for oil and gas is low. Therefore, there would be no significant impacts to leasable mineral resources.

The WSA would also remain closed to locatable mineral entry, location, exploration, and development. Since the potential for the occurrence of locatable minerals is low, there would be minimal impact to locatable mineral resources.

Conclusion: The 487 acres of the Whiskey Mountain WSA would continue to be closed to all forms of mineral leasing or entry. However, there is low potential for these resources, so no development would be forgone.

All Wilderness Alternative

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Wilderness values on the entire 487 acres of the Whiskey Mountain WSA would be given the special legislative protection afforded to designated wilderness. An estimated 10 visitor days annually of recreational ORV use would be eliminated from within the WSA. The elimination of ORV use would benefit the wilderness value of solitude because visitors would not encounter or hear ORV users in the area. In addition, there would be no vehicle use or improvements associated with sheep management within the WSA. This would benefit the wilderness values of solitude and naturalness by eliminating these temporary intrusions in the area.

Conclusion: Under the All Wilderness Alternative, wilderness values would be protected on the entire Whiskey Mountain WSA (487 acres).

Impacts on Recreation

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, the WSA would be closed to ORV use. An estimated 10 visitor days annually of recreational ORV use would be eliminated. However, this would not cause a reduction in visitation for the purpose of viewing bighorn sheep. Visitation would still be expected to remain stable at 300 visitor days annually.

Conclusion: Under the All Wilderness Alternative, there would be a loss of 10 visitor days annually of recreational off-road vehicle use. Visitation patterns for viewing bighorn sheep would change, but the overall use level would not decrease.

Impacts on Wildlife

Under wilderness designation, the WSA lands would continue to receive a high degree of protection, and bighorn sheep would be considered an important special feature and a primary value of the wilderness. The WSA would be closed to recreational traffic and thus, vehicle-related disturbance would be eliminated in the near future.

The existing guzzler and fence would be maintained, but animal trapping for transplant would not occur. Other habitat management techniques using chemical and mechanical means would not be permitted. Although prescribed burns could occur in designated wilderness under certain conditions, burning in the Whiskey Mountain WSA would not achieve the desired results. Thus, the loss of management flexibility and an eventual long-term loss of sheep habitat to succession within the WSA. In addition, successional changes to a closed timber type in the WSA could seriously inhibit traditional bighorn movement around the west end and across the WSA to preferred sites on BLM Ridge. This could cause bighorn use to shift to preferred sites on Sheep Ridge which are already used to capacity. The meaning of this to the bighorn sheep herd is uncertain. Probably less than 10% of the herd (less than 100 animals) would be affected and it is possible these animals would relocate to other areas, and therefore, not represent an actual loss of bighorn sheep in the herd.

Conclusion: The effects on wildlife under the All Wilderness Alternative are similar to those under the No Wilderness Alternative, except that under wilderness, habitat manipulation practices in the WSA would cease and long-term successional changes could have the effect of relocating and reducing up to 10% (100 animals) of the herd. Over the short term, disturbance to habitat and animals would be reduced.

Impacts on Energy and Mineral Resources

The Whiskey Mountain WSA would remain closed to mineral leasing and location. In addition, study of the WSA for geology and mineral potential would not be allowed, except for aerial surveys and nonimpairing ground surveys conducted according to an approved plan. Such studies would not degrade the wilderness character of the area. However, since the potential for the occurrence of oil and gas, other leasable minerals, and locatable minerals is considered low, this alternative would cause little impact to mineral resources.

Conclusion: The 487 acres of the Whiskey Mountain WSA would continue to be closed to all forms of mineral leasing or entry. However, there is low potential for these resources, so no development would be forgone.

Dubois Badlands

Proposed Action (No Wilderness)

Impacts on Wilderness Values

The entire WSA would be recommended for nonwilderness designation and none of the wil-

derness values on 4,520 acres would receive the special legislative protection provided by wilderness designation.

All oil and gas leases would be subject to the No Surface Occupancy Stipulation (see appendix A), so there would be no surface disturbance and no adverse effects to wilderness values from within the WSA. Leasing activities outside the WSA could affect the perception of naturalness and solitude to the WSA's visitors, but no development is anticipated.

Based on the Lander RMP decision, the WSA would be closed to recreational ORV use. An estimated 100 visitor days annually of ORV use would be eliminated from the WSA. This would benefit the wilderness values of naturalness and solitude because visitors would not see or hear recreational ORV users in the area.

No other management actions are anticipated which would adversely affect wilderness values either in the short term or in the long term.

Conclusion: Under the No Wilderness Alternative, none of the wilderness values in the Dubois Badlands WSA (4,520 acres) would receive special legislative protection. However, the WSA's wilderness values of naturalness and solitude would not significantly suffer because of the limited scope of activity expected within the WSA.

Impacts on Recreation

The Lander RMP closed the WSA to recreational ORV use. This designation would continue under the No Wilderness Alternative. An estimated 100 visitor days annually of ORV use would be eliminated from the WSA. Future opportunities for ORV-oriented recreation in the WSA would be forgone. However, there are similar opportunities for ORV use on public land throughout the region. Any ORV use displaced from this area as a result of the RMP decision would be absorbed with no consequence on the surrounding public land.

Conclusion: The Dubois Badlands WSA would be closed to vehicles, which would eliminate 100 visitor days annually of recreational ORV use. The impacts of displacing this use to other nonwilderness public land would be negligible.

Impacts on Wildlife

The area has been designated an ACEC by the Lander RMP in part to protect bighorn sheep habitat. The area would be closed to ORV use, reducing habitat damage, and animal disturbance. No oil and gas activity is expected, further reducing habitat disturbance.

Conclusion: Over the short term, reduced ORV damage to habitat would be expected. Over the long term, wildlife values would receive a very high degree of protection with small chance of adverse impact.

Impacts on Energy and Mineral Resources

Under this alternative, the Dubois Badlands WSA would be open to mineral leasing subject to the no surface occupancy stipulation to protect surface resource values. The two existing leases within the WSA already contain seasonal restrictions on exploration activities for protection of wildlife (see appendix B). One lease contains a restriction to protect drainages and excessive erosion on slopes in excess of 25% (see appendix A).

Exploration for oil and gas is not anticipated on future leases subject to the No Surface Occupancy Stipulation (see appendix A). The expense and difficulty of directional drilling from outside the WSA would make such exploration unlikely. Exploration opportunities would, therefore, be limited.

The WSA would be open to entry for locatable minerals with a plan of operations (43 CFR 3809) required on all exploration and development activities. Since the potential for the occurrence of locatable minerals is low, little exploration and no development activity is expected to occur.

Conclusion: Leasing in the entire 4,520-acre WSA would be subject to the NSO stipulation; thus, exploration and development would be limited. The WSA would be open to locatable mineral development, but no activities are expected.

All Wilderness Alternative

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Wilderness values on 4,520 acres (the entire WSA) would be given the special legislative protection afforded to designated wilderness. The entire area would be withdrawn from all forms of mineral entry and leasing. Therefore, no mineral activities of any kind would be allowed, and there would be no short-term loss of wilderness values.

The WSA would be closed to vehicles. An estimated 100 visitor days annually of recreational ORV use would be eliminated. This would benefit

the wilderness value of solitude because visitors would not encounter or hear ORV users in the area.

Conclusion: Wilderness values of naturalness and solitude would be protected on the entire 4,520-acre Dubois Badlands WSA.

Impacts on Recreation

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, impacts to recreation would be the same as under the Proposed Action. An estimated 100 visitor days annually of recreational ORV use would be eliminated from the entire 4,520 acres of the WSA. Future opportunities would be forgone. However, there are similar opportunities for ORV use on public land throughout the region. Any ORV use displaced from the WSA would be absorbed with no consequence on surrounding public land.

Conclusion: Recreational ORV use of 100 visitor days annually would be forgone; the impact of displacing this use to other nonwilderness public land would be negligible. No additional impacts would occur as a result of wilderness designation.

Impacts on Wildlife

The impacts on wildlife would be less than those described under the Proposed Action. No mining claims would be allowed and existing oil and gas leases could not be explored. The result would be no habitat disturbance in the WSA. Because ORV use would be eliminated, disturbance to wildlife would be minimized.

Conclusion: Under this alternative, wildlife habitat would be maintained. Over the long term, the area would receive a very high degree of protection with small chance of adverse impact.

Impacts on Energy and Mineral Resources

The Dubois Badlands WSA would be closed to mineral leasing and entry. Therefore, no new oil and gas leases or other mineral leases would be issued and no mining claims would be allowed. In addition, study of the WSA for geology and mineral potential would not be allowed, except for aerial surveys and nonimpairing ground surveys conducted according to an approved plan. Such studies could not degrade the wilderness character of the area.

The two existing post-FLPMA oil and gas leases are subject to the Wilderness Stipulation (see appendix B) and could not be explored. Thus, the opportunity to gain subsurface geologic information would be diminished. The opportunity to explore for and develop locatable minerals would be forgone. There would be little impact to locatable minerals since the potential for their occurrence is low.

Conclusion: The entire 4,520 acres of the Dubois Badlands WSA would be withdrawn from all forms of mineral leasing and entry. The opportunity to gain subsurface geologic information regarding oil and gas would be diminished. There would be little impact to locatable minerals because the potential for their occurrence is low.

CHAPTER 5

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Coordination and Public Involvement

The draft Whiskey Mountain-Dubois Badlands Wilderness EIS has been prepared by specialists from the BLM's Rawlins District Office, with assistance from the Lander Resource Area Office.

Public participation has been an ongoing process throughout the inventory and planning phases of the wilderness review required by FLPMA. The review process included inventories of resources, public participation, and coordination with individuals, organizations, and other agencies. Care has been exercised to inform the public throughout the wilderness review process.

A *Federal Register* notice and news releases in December 1987 announced the initiation of the Whiskey Mountain-Dubois Badlands Wilderness EIS, inviting comments and soliciting suggestions and input on issues to be analyzed in the wilderness EIS. In addition, a public scoping meeting was held in Dubois specifically to allow interested persons an opportunity to express their concerns and opinions regarding the two WSAs analyzed in this EIS. A summary of those comments is on file in the Lander Resource Area.

Consistency

Federal, state and local agencies, and organizations were considered during the preparation of this EIS. Wilderness suitability recommendations resulting from this EIS were analyzed in relationship to consistency with the plans of these agencies and organizations. No inconsistencies with any existing state or other government plans were identified. Frequent contacts have been made with state, county, and Forest Service officials.

Reviewers

The following list identifies agencies, organizations, and individuals that have expressed an interest in the Whiskey Mountain-Dubois Badlands Wilderness EIS, and that have been contacted during the planning process.

U.S. Department of the Interior
- Bureau of Land Management (340), Washington, D.C.
- Bureau of Land Management (931), Cheyenne, Wyoming
- Bureu of Indian Affairs, Portland, Oregon
- Office of Environmental Project Review, Denver, Colorado
- National Park Service, Div. of Env. Compliance, Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Div. of Env. Coord., Washington, D.C.
- Minerals Management Service, Offshore Environmental Assessment, Washington, D.C.
- Bureau of Reclamation, Division of Environmental Affairs, Washington, D.C.
- Bureau of Mines, Mineral Data Analysis (MS-5000), Washington, D.C.
- U.S. Geological Survey, National Center (423), Reston, VA
- Office of Surface Mining, Division of Environmental & Economic Analysis, Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Forest Service, Office of Environmental Coordination, Washington, D.C.

U.S. Air Force
- HQ USAF/LEER, Washington, D.C.
- HQ-US LEVX, Office of Environmental Planning, Bolling AFB, Washington, D.C.
- Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, Installation Environment and Safety, Pentagon, Admiralty, VA

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Chief, Planning Division, Omaha, NE
- Chief, Planning Division, Portland, OR

Department of Energy (EP-36), Washington, D.C.
Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Bethesda, MD
Environmental Protection Agency, Denver, CO
- Environmental Review Coordinator, EPA Region VIII, Denver, CO
- State of Wyoming, Wyoming State Clearing House, Cheyenne, WY

Other Contacts

Federal Government
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Farmers Home Administration
Soil Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Transportation
Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Technical Committee, Lander, Wyoming (includes representatives from BLM, USFS, and WGFD)
State of Wyoming
- Office of the Governor
- Archives, Museums, and Historical Department

National Guard
State Board of Land Commissioners
University of Wyoming
- Conservation Commission
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Environmental Quality

Game and Fish Department
Geological Survey
Highway Department
Recreation Commission
State Engineer
Water Development Commission
Oil and Gas Conservation Commission
Public Lands Commission
Public Lands and Farm Loan District
State Historic Preservation Officer
State Planning Coordinator's Office
Indian Tribes
Arapahoe Business Council
Shoshone Business Council
Counties and Cities
Cities and towns of Dubois and Lander
County commissioners, county planning commissions, and weed and pest control districts of Fremont County
United States Legislators
The Honorable Richard Cheney
The Honorable Alan K. Simpson
The Honorable Malcolm Wallop

State Elected Officials
Wyoming Governor's Office
State senators and state representatives from Albany, Carbon, Laramie, and Sweetwater counties.

In addition to the agencies and offices listed above, notices, requests for comments, and copies of this document have been sent to businesses, organizations, interest groups, and individuals. Copies of the wilderness EIS are available for review in the BLM offices at Rawlins and Lander.

List of Preparers

Bob Janssen, Chief, Division of Planning

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Responsibility: EIS Team Leader

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Qualifications: Bureau of Land Management, 7 years; B.S. Resource Recreation Management, M.A. Interdisciplinary Studies, Oregon State University.

Responsibility: Technical Coordinator, Wilderness Resource, Recreation Resources

Mary Hanson, Environmental Coordinator

Qualifications: Bureau of Land Management, 9 years, U.S. Forest Service, 2 years; U.S. Information Agency, 3 years; B.S. Parks and Recreation Management, University of Wyoming.

Responsibility: Environmental Coordination

Fred Stabler, District Wildlife Biologist

Qualifications: Bureau of Land Management, 6 years; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1 year; B.S. Wildlife Biology, Washington State University, M.S. Fishery Resources, University of Idaho.

Responsibility: Wildlife Resources

Barbara Pitman, Geologist

Qualifications: Bureau of Land Management, 5 years; USGS, 1 year; B.S. Geology, Montana State University.

Responsibility: Oil and Gas Resources, Mineral Resources

Jan Macey, Clerk-Typist

Qualifications: Bureau of Land Management, 3 years; Bureau of Reclamation, 8 years; Business College.

Responsibility: Word Processing

Coordination, Support, and Review

Coordination, support, and review were provided by the Lander Resource Area staff, and from the Division of Lands and Renewable Resources at BLM's Wyoming State Office in Cheyenne.

APPENDIX A

STANDARD MITIGATION GUIDELINES

Purpose

The primary purpose of these guidelines is to attain statewide consistency in determining requirements for avoiding and mitigating environmental impacts associated with surface-disturbing activities. The guidelines will be applied to surface-disturbing activities including oil and gas leases as necessary to achieve resource management objectives.

Application of the guidelines is intended to (1) reserve for the Bureau the right to modify the operations of all surface-disturbing activities as part of the statutory requirements for environmental protection, and (2) inform a potential lessee, permittee, or operator of the requirements that must be met when using public lands. They may be used directly as stipulations or they may be modified with specific or specialized mitigation following the submission of a detailed plan of development or other project proposal and an environmental analysis.

Surface Disturbance Mitigation Guideline

Surface disturbance will be restricted in any of the following areas or conditions. Modifications to this limitation may be approved in writing by the Authorized Officer.

1. Slopes in excess of 25%.
2. Within important scenic areas identified in a land use plan (Class I and II Visual Resource Management Areas).
3. Within 500 feet of surface water and/or riparian areas.
4. Within either one-quarter mile or the visual horizon (whichever is closer) of historic trails.
5. Construction with frozen material or during periods when the soil material is saturated, frozen, or when watershed damage is likely to occur.

Guidance

The intent of the Surface Disturbance Mitigation Guideline is to inform interested parties (potential lessees, permittees, or operators) that when one or more of the five (1a. through 1e.) conditions exists, surface disturbing activities will be restricted or prohibited, unless or until the permittee or his designated representative and the surface management agency (SMA) arrive at an acceptable plan for mitigation of anticipated impacts. This negotiation will occur prior to development.

Specific criteria (e.g., 500 feet from water) have been established based upon the best information available. However, such items as geographical areas and seasons must be delineated at the field level.

Waiver or modification of requirements developed from this guideline must be based upon environmental analysis of proposals, such as, plans of development, plans of operation, Applications for Permit to Drill, etc., and, if necessary, must allow for other mitigation to be applied on a site specific basis.

Wildlife Mitigation Guideline

1. To protect important big game winter habitat, activities, or surface use will not be allowed during the period from November 15 to April 30 within certain areas encompassed by the authorization. The same criteria applies to defined big game birthing areas from the period of May 1 to June 30.

   This limitation may or may not apply to extended long-term operation and maintenance of a developed project, pending environmental analysis of any operational or production aspects.

   Modifications to this limitation in any year may be approved in writing by the Authorized Officer.

2. To protect important raptor and/or sage and sharp-tailed grouse nesting habitat, activities or surface use will not be allowed during the period from February 1 to July 31 within certain areas encompassed by the authorization. The same criteria applies to defined raptor and game bird winter concentration areas from the period of November 15 to April 30. This limitation may or may not apply to extended long-term operation and maintenance of a developed project, pending environmental analysis of any operational or production aspects.

   Modification to this limitation in any year may be approved in writing by the Authorized Officer.

3. No activities or surface use will be allowed on that portion of the authorization area identified within (legal description) for the purpose of protecting (e.g., sage/sharp-tailed grouse breeding grounds and/or other species/activities) habitat.

   Modifications to this limitation in any year may be approved in writing by the Authorized Officer.

4. Portions of the authorized use area legally described as (legal description) are known or suspected to be essential habitat for (name) which is a threatened/endangered species. Prior to conducting any on-site activities, the lessee/permittee will be required to conduct inventories or studies in accordance with BLM and Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) guidelines to verify the presence or absence of this species. In the event that (name) occurrence is identified, the lessee/permittee will be required to modify operational plans to include the protection requirements of this species and its habitat (e.g., seasonal use restrictions, occupancy limitations, facility design modifications, etc.).

Guidance

The Wildlife Mitigation Guideline is intended to provide two basic types of protection, seasonal restriction 1. and 2. and prohibition of activities or surface use 3. Item 4. of course, is specific to situations involving threatened and endangered species. Legal descriptions will ultimately be required and should be measurable and legally definable. There are no minimum subdivision requirements at this time. The area delineated can and should be defined, as necessary, based upon current biological data prior to the time of processing an application and issuing the use authorization. The legal description must eventually become a condition for approval of the permit, plan of development, and/or other use authorization.

The seasonal restriction section identifies three example groups of species and delineates three similar timeframe restrictions. The big game species including elk, moose, deer, antelope, and bighorn sheep all require protection of crucial winter range between November 15 and April 30. Elk and bighorn sheep also require protection from disturbance during the period of May 1 to June 30, when they typically occupy distinct calving and lambing areas. Raptors include eagles, accipiters, falcons (peregrine, prairie, and merlin), buteos (ferruginous and swainson's hawks), osprey, and burrowing owls. The raptors and sage and sharp-tailed grouse all require nesting protection during periods between February 1 and July 31. The same birds often require protection from disturbance during the period of November 15 through April 30 while they occupy winter concentration areas.

Item 2, regarding the prohibition of activity or surface use is intended for protection of unique wildlife habitat areas or values within the use area. These areas or values must be factors that limit life-cycle activities (e.g., sage grouse strutting grounds, known threatened and endangered species habitat, etc.) that cannot be protected using seasonal restrictions.

Waiver or modification of requirements developed from this guideline must be based upon environmental analysis of proposals, such as plans of development, plans of operation, Applications for Permit to Drill, etc., and, if necessary, must allow for other mitigation to be applied on a site specific basis.

Cultural Resource Mitigation Guideline

When a proposed discretionary land use has potential for affecting the characteristics which qualify a cultural property for the National Register of Historic Places, mitigation will be considered. In accordance with Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act, procedures specified in 36 CFR 800 will be used in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in arriving at determinations regarding the need and type of mitigation to be required.

Guidance

The preferred strategy for treating potential adverse effects on cultural properties is "avoidance." If avoidance involves project relocation, the new project area may also require cultural resource inventory. If avoidance is imprudent or unfeasible, appropriate mitigation may include excavation (data recovery), stabilization, monitoring, protection barriers and signs, or other physical and administrative measures.

Reports documenting results of cultural resource inventory, evaluation, and the establishment of mitigation alternatives (if necessary) shall be written according to standards contained in BLM Manuals, the cultural resource permit stipulations, and in other policy issued by the BLM. These reports must provide sufficient information for Section 106 consultation. Reports shall be reviewed for adequacy by the appropriate BLM archeologist. If cultural properties on or eligible for the National Register are located within these areas of potential impact and cannot be avoided, the Authorized Officer shall begin the Section 106 consultation process in accordance with the procedures contained in 36 CFR 800.

Mitigation measures shall be implemented according to the mitigation plan approved by the BLM Authorized Officer. Such plans are usually prepared by the land use applicant's contract archeologist according to BLM specifications. Mitigation plans will be reviewed as part of Section

106 consultation for National Register eligible or listed properties. The extent and nature of recommended mitigation shall be commensurate with the significance of the cultural resource involved and the anticipated extent of damage. Reasonable costs for mitigation will be borne by the land use applicant. Mitigation must be cost effective and realistic. It must consider project requirements and limitations, input from concerned parties, and be BLM approved or BLM formulated.

Mitigation of paleontological and natural history sites will be treated on a case-by-case basis. Factors such as site significance, economics, safety, and project urgency must be taken into account when making a decision to mitigate. Authority to protect (through mitigation) such values is provided for in FLPMA, Section 102(8). When avoidance is not possible, appropriate mitigation may include excavation (data recovery), stabilization, monitoring, protection barriers and signs, or other physical and administrative protection measures.

Special Resource Mitigation Guideline

To protect (resource value), activities or surface use will not be allowed (i.e., within a specific distance of the resource value or between date-to-date) in (legal subdivision).

This limitation may or may not apply to extended long-term operation and maintenance of the project, pending environmental analysis of any operational or production aspects.

Modifications to this limitation in any year may be approved in writing by the Authorized Officer.

Example Resource Categories (Select or Identify Category and Specific Resource Value):

1. Recreation areas.
2. Special natural history or paleontological features.
3. Special management areas.
4. Sections of major rivers.
5. Prior existing rights-of-way.
6. Occupied dwellings.
7. Other (Specify).

Guidance

The Special Resource Mitigation Guideline is intended for use only in site-specific situations where one of the first three general mitigation guidelines will not adequately address the concern. The resource value, location, and specific restriction must be clearly identified. A detailed plan addressing specific mitigation and special restrictions on development will be required prior to development and will become a condition for approval of the permit, plan of development, or other use authorization.

Waiver or modification of requirements developed from this guideline must be based upon environmental analysis of proposals, such as plans of development, plans of operation, Applications for Permit to Drill, etc., and if necessary, must allow for other mitigation to be applied on a site specific basis.

No Surface Occupancy Guideline

No surface occupancy will be allowed on the following described lands (legal subdivision/area) because of (resource value).

Example Resource Categories (Select or Identify Category and Specific Resource Values):

1. Recreation areas, (e.g., campgrounds, historic trails, national monuments).
2. Major reservoirs/dams.
3. Special management areas (e.g., ACEC, known threatened and endangered species habitat, wild and scenic rivers).
4. Other (Specify).

Guidance

The No Surface Occupancy (NSO) Mitigation Guideline is intended for use only when other mitigation is determined insufficient to adequately protect the public interest, and is the only alternative to "no development" or "no leasing." The legal subdivision and resource value of concern must be identified and be tied to a NSO land use planning decision.

Waiver of or exception(s) to the NSO requirement will be subject to the same test used to initially justify its imposition. If upon evaluation of a site-specific proposal, it is found that less restrictive mitigation would adequately protect the public interest or value of concern, then a waiver or exception to the NSO requirement is possible. The record must show that because conditions or uses have changed, less restrictive requirements will protect the public interest. An environmental analysis must be conducted and documented (EA or EIS, as necessary) in order to provide the basis for a waiver or exception to a NSO planning decision. If the waiver or exception is found to be consistent with the intent of the planning decision, they may be granted. If found inconsistent with the intent of the planning decision, a plan amendment would be required before the waiver or exception could be granted.

When considering the "no development" or "no leasing" option, a rigorous test must be met and fully documented in the record. This test must be based upon stringent standards described in the land use planning document. Since rejection of all development rights is more severe than the most restrictive mitigation requirement, the record must show that consideration was given to development subject to reasonable mitigation, including no surface occupancy. The record must also show that other mitigation was determined to be insufficient to adequately protect the public interest. A "no development" or "no leasing" decision should not be made solely because it appears that conventional methods of development would be unfeasible, especially where an NSO restriction may be acceptable to a potential permittee. In such cases, the potential permittee should have the opportunity to decide whether or not to go ahead with the proposal (or accept the use authorization), recognizing that an NSO restriction is involved.

APPENDIX B

WILDERNESS PROTECTION STIPULATION

By accepting this leases, the lessee acknowledges that the lands contained in this lease are being inventoried or evaluated for their wilderness potential by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) under section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, 90 Stat. 2743 (43 USC Sec. 1782), and that exploration or production activities which are not in conformity with Section 603 may never be permitted. Expenditures in leases on which exploration drilling or production are not allowed will create no additional rights in the lease, and such leases will expire in accordance with law.

Activities will be permitted under the lease so long as BLM determines they will not impair wilderness suitability. This will be the case either until the BLM wilderness inventory process has resulted in a final wilderness inventory decision that an area lacks wilderness characteristics, or int he case of a wilderness study area until Congress has decided not to designate the lands included within this lease as wilderness. Activities will be considered nonimpairing if the BLM determines that they meet each of the following three criteria:

1. It is temporary. This means that the use or activity may continue until the time when it must be terminated in order to meet the reclamation requirement of paragraphs b. and c. below. A temporary use that creates no new surface disturbance may continue unless Congress designates the area as wilderness, so long as it can easily and immediately be terminated at that time, if necessary to management of the area as wilderness.

2. Any temporary impacts caused by the activity must, at a minimum, be capable of being reclaimed to a condition of being substantially unnoticeable in the wilderness study area (or inventory unit) as a whole by the time the Secretary of the Interior is scheduled to send his recommendations on that area to the President, and the operator will be required to reclaim the impacts to that standard by that date. If the wilderness study is postponed, the reclamation deadline will be extended accordingly. If the wilderness study is accelerated, the reclamation deadline will not be changed. A full schedule of wilderness studies will be developed by the Department upon completion of the intensive wilderness inventory. In the meantime, in areas not yet scheduled for wilderness study, the reclamation will be scheduled for completion within 4 years after approval of the activity. (Obviously, if and when the Interim Management Policy ceases to apply to an inventory until dropped from wilderness review following a final wilderness inventory decision of the BLM State Director, the reclamation deadline previously specified will cease to apply.) The Secretary's schedule for transmitting his recommendations to the President will not be changed as a result of any unexpected inability to complete the reclamation by the specified date, and such inability will not constrain the Secretary's recommendation with respect to the area's suitability or nonsuitability for preservation as wilderness.

   The reclamation will, to the extent practicable, be done while the activity is in progress. Reclamation will include the contouring of the topography to a natural appearance (not necessarily to the original contour), the replacement of topsoil, and the restoration of plant cover at least to the point where natural succession is occurring. Plant cover will be restored by means of reseeding or replanting, using species previously occurring in the area. If necessary, irrigation will be required. The reclamation schedule will be based on conservative assumptions with regard to growing conditions, so as to ensure that the reclamation will be complete, and the impacts will be substantially unnoticeable in the area as a whole, by the time the Secretary is schcduled to send his recommendations to the President. ("Substantially unnoticeable" is defined in Appendix F of the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands under Wilderness Review.)

3. When the activity is terminated, and after any needed reclamation is complete, the area's wilderness values must not have been degraded so far, compared with the area's values of other purposes, as to significantly constrain the Secretary's recommendation with respect to the area's suitability or nonsuitability for preservation as wilderness. The wilderness values to be considered are those mentioned in section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act, including naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude or for primitive and unconfined recreation, and ecological, geological or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. If all or any part of the area included within the leasehold estate is formally designated by Congress as wilderness, exploration and development operations taking place or to take place on that part of the lease will remain subject to the requirements of this stipulation, except as modified by the Act of Congress designating the land as wilderness. If Congress does not specify in such act how existing leases like this one will be managed, then the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964 will apply, as implemented by rules and regulations promulgated by the Department of the Interior.

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
MACOMB, IL 61455

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